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ITALY

I. Status and Strength of the Italian Communist Party (PCI)

In the June 1953 national elections the PCI polled 6,120,709 votes, (22.6% of total) and won 142 seats (24.1%). The estimated membership of the PCI is 1,200,000 to 1,500,000; its claimed membership as of December 1957 is 1,700,000. The PCI has a following in almost every social class and in every geographic area of Italy. The bulk of the membership consists of urban workers (40%), farm laborers (18%) and tenant farmers (12%). A major source of Communist strength is money to operate an elaborate party press and to conduct massive propaganda campaigns. By expending great energy, use of tight discipline and sense of direction, the Communists also control Italy's largest trade union federation.

Although the Communists increased their vote from 19% of the total in 1946 to 22.6% in the national elections of 1953, they suffered losses of about three percent of their previous vote in the Sicilian elections of June 1955 and in the local elections of May 1956. Since 1954 the Communists have also suffered heavily in factory grievance committee elections.

The PCI has partially recovered from the shock of the 1956 Hungarian revolution and in recent local elections the party has been able to hold its ground. The PCI was still losing many of its younger members in 1957 and in September of that year the Party officially admitted a 10 percent loss of members during the preceding year.

II. Party Units Responsible for Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping or Terrorist Missions

The headquarters PCI organization which is responsible for the ultimate direction and organization of militant action groups which undertake aggressive acts during strikes and at other appropriate moments has not been identified.

At the local level PCI militant action groups (referred to in the press as Communist flying squads, roving squads, etc.) were in evidence during violent strike campaigns of 1947, 1948 and 1950.

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They were especially active in certain industrial areas in the north and through use of excessive violence and terrorism alienated some portions of the population from the Party. The Communist-controlled trade union federation, apparently assigned a prominent role in PCI's objective to obstruct the government's rearmament program, undoubtedly participated to an undetermined degree in the organization and activity of the militant action groups.

III. Sabotage Training for PCI Members in Italy

Although numerous reports have stated that such schools exist, none of these have ever been confirmed.

IV. Sabotage Training in Communist Bloc Countries

Again, there are countless reports that such training for PCI members exists, particularly in the Prague area, but to date there is no confirmation that specifically sabotage training is given in these schools.

V. Targets of Communist Sabotage

a. U.S. Personnel, Installations, etc.

During Eisenhower's visit to Italy in 1951 there were Communist-staged demonstrations involving some violence.

b. Italian Government Installations and Properties

On 15 July 1948 Communists attacked sheds near Venice where surplus war materials were stored. In late March 1950 there was local insurrection at San Severo, when Communist strikers occupied and held the town for several hours. In September 1957 highways were blocked and local tax offices were wrecked in Brindisi Province by Communist agitators who exploited grievances of the grape growers. During the extensive, violent strikes of 1947, 1948, 1950 in addition to the above action, PCI groups sabotaged transport systems--especially the railways--and other national properties. See below.

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c. Other Sabotage Targets

The following are selected incidents of sabotage which are typical of action undertaken during the periods indicated: Some of this destruction was probably committed by anarchists.

(1) Personnel and property of non-Communist or anti-Communist Organizations

In Genoa, November 1947, Communists demolished the headquarters of the Nationalist Party; they robbed and seriously injured the elderly janitor. Communists also looted and set fire to offices of the Social Democrats and seized the leader of this party and severely injured him. Many witnesses who expressed disapproval of Communist terrorism were also beaten. In the same month Communists in Milan set fire to installations of the non-Communist partisan movement. There they also demolished the printing plant of the monarchist newspaper. Communists were reported responsible for causing the explosion of an ammunition factory near Milan. According to official Italian government figures published 27 November 1947, eighty-two political offices were destroyed throughout Italy in the period 12-25 November 1947. Many others were ravaged after 25 November.

In March 1948 Communists attacked a Christian Democratic election parade near Castellamare, killing a policeman and injuring ten other persons.

After the attempt on Togliatti's life, Communists campaigned to force the government to resign. According to press accounts of the day after the assassination attempt there were twenty policemen injured in Bologna; one rioter was killed in Taranto; two persons were killed in Naples; two persons were wounded in La Spezia. Several other persons were killed or wounded in Rome, Leghorn and Florence. In Genoa on 15 July 1948, two civilians were killed and five were seriously wounded.

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In May 1949 in the Emilia region and near Milan there were battles between Communist and non-Communist workers. Agricultural workers who had seceded from the Communist-dominated labor unions were attacked by Communist groups. During a 36-hour general strike in Milan in July 1949 twenty persons were killed and several hundred were injured. On 21 March 1950 the Right-Wing Socialist Mayor of Milan was threatened with bodily harm when he refused to participate in Communist-sponsored protest meetings. On 21 March 1950 in Genoa rightist newspapers were seized and burned in the streets. In September 1950 CGIL locals in most cities declared general strikes in sympathy with rice workers; one worker was killed and several were mauled.

In November 1956 Communists took over a demonstration which had originally been organized by the neo-Fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) to protest Soviet intervention in Hungary. Communists transformed the action into anti-British, anti-French propaganda protesting the invasion of Egypt and succeeded in keeping the demonstration free from anti-Soviet aspects.

(2) Attacks on Police

Communists ambushed a police unit near Abbadia San Salvatore on 15 July 1948. On the same day in Genoa, Communists captured a police station and a large number of police and carabinieri were held and beaten. In Milan the same day fourteen policemen were injured.

In the Emilia region in May 1949 Communists attacked police who had intervened when Communists attacked non-Communist workers. The ensuing violence resulted in one death and thirty persons injured. In the fall of 1949 at the Breda engineering works near Milan Communists clashed with police; as a result of this scuffle three deaths occurred and eighteen persons were injured.

In March 1950 at Adria four carabinieri were disarmed and severely wounded. On 22 March 1950 the CGIL Executive

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Committee called a general strike. Communists exerted the maximum effort to insure that every worker desert his job. Hundreds of persons, including many policemen, were injured.

On May Day 1957 PCI action groups started a parade in Naples which ended in a clash between police and PCI members. Police suffered thirty-six casualties when members of their force were struck by empty bottles hurled by Communists.

(3) Sabotage of Public Utilities

Communists captured a power station in Genoa on 15 July 1948. In Venice on the same day Communists occupied the broadcasting station. In late March 1950 bus and trolley car transportation was stopped in almost all industrial cities.

(4) Railway Sabotage

On 15 July 1948 in several localities Communists blew up railway tracks. During strikes of March 1950 CGIL strikers stoned train windows and tore up railway tracks. At the same time railway and ferry services were interrupted in and near Venice. Also at Porto Marghere tracks were removed and trucks were turned over at railway crossings. There was widespread disruption during the same month of national and international rail lines.

(5) Economic and Industrial Sabotage

On 15 July 1948 Communists attacked oil storage tanks near Venice. On the same day at Turin, the managers of all large factories were held as hostages by workers who held the factories. On 22 July 1948 four hundred men occupied the ammunition factories near Milan and for a while resisted police, by whom they were finally routed.

On 15 March 1950 Communist militant action groups

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forced restaurants, movies and shops to close. They broke into private offices to force work stoppages. On the same day there were several cases of land seizures, particularly near Bologna and in the South, which resulted in clashes between farmers and police. In the latter part of the month (March 1950) most shops in the cities were forced to close. At about the same time there were several cases of land seizures in Puglia province in the course of which thirty persons were injured.

In September 1950 rice fields were flooded ruining hundreds of acres of freshly cut crops. Wheat fields, barns and houses were set on fire by Communist action squads.

VI. Evidence of Direction and Support from Communist Bloc Countries

The CPSU requirement, made clear during the Founding Conference of the Cominform, that CP's of Western countries should make an all-out drive to hinder the European Recovery Plan was promptly obeyed by the PCI. This was done despite the fact that Togliatti, PCI leader, was known as late as July 1947 to believe that acceptance of U.S. assistance under the Marshall Plan was indispensable to improve the conditions of the Italian working class.

Non-Communist trade unionists and other groups noticed that during the 1947-1948 strikes the PCI-controlled trade unions were well supplied with funds (in contrast to a previous period of apparent impoverishment) but details concerning the sources of these funds were not available. The discussion of material aid supplied to the French CP during strikes of 1947-1948 shows evidence that funds were brought into France by agents from Communist Bloc countries. It is reasonable to assume that funds were similarly supplied to PCI and to the trade unions under its control.

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IX. Branch and [REDACTED] Estimate of Threat Posed by these Activities

The remarks which were made under item IX of the section pertaining to France also apply to Italy since the situations of the two parties and their trade unions are approximately the same. In the case of the PCI, however, there seems to be less evidence at present

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that organizational provision has been made for groups which will commit sabotage and terrorism when the Party decides upon such action. The fact that such groups were on hand in the past when aggression (sabotage, terrorism, etc.) was decided upon, is indicative that they would not be lacking if needed in the future.

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OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

I. Sabotage Committed

Reporting of sabotage action carried out by other European Communist parties has been almost negligible in the postwar period. There were several cases of explosions on Norwegian vessels in 1954-1955, but none of these cases were definitely determined to be sabotage and in no case was there any proof of involvement of Communist party members.

Only one case of sabotage has been reported from The Netherlands. In the spring of 1956 it was found that Communist telephone linesmen who were working on the construction of concrete defenses in the eastern part of the country had deliberately misplaced telephone lines and cables in order to facilitate eventual sabotage.

During general strike action in Iceland in the spring of 1955 the Communist Party of Iceland proved that it was capable of seriously disrupting the food supply for Reykjavik; the action also showed that a small police force was inadequate to control aggressive action by the Communist Party on a short-range basis.

II. Estimated Threat

Because of lack of broad, popular support and because of apparent vigilance among non-Communist trade union and political leaders to contain Communist influence, it is not likely that Communist parties in the other European countries (not specifically covered in this survey) could effect widespread sabotage. In some areas they probably could, on a temporary basis, cause disruption of communication systems, transport systems and carry out factory damage in some industrial towns where Communist strength is centered.

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